

Black Patriots Silver Dollar Available from the U.S. Mint

February 13, 1998

Sales Support First African American Memorial on the National Mall

Washington, D.C. – As the nation celebrates Black History Month, the Silver Dollar honoring the first Black Revolutionary War Patriot, the first American to give his life in the Revolutionary War, is now available from the U.S. Mint.

“The Black Revolutionary War Patriots Silver Dollar focuses on Crispus Attucks’ sacrifice and the commitment of all Black American Patriots,” said Mint Director Philip N. Diehl. “It is particularly fitting that we recall their contribution during Black History Month, giving Americans the opportunity to learn about the role that Black Patriots played in our revolutionary struggle.”

Dozens of black Virginians fought and died with their white compatriots at Valley Forge and the 1st Rhode Island Regiment was composed entirely of 250 black soldiers. When the English General Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, he was shocked to find, at the side of General Lafayette, a black patriot named James Armistead. Cornwallis had believed that this master spy, a double agent, was working for the British.

Altogether some 5,000 black patriots fought for freedom — although for many of them, only their descendants would be free.

According to law, the U.S. Mint is authorized to produce up to 500,000 silver dollars to commemorate Black Revolutionary Patriots and the 275th anniversary of the birth of Crispus Attucks. A portion of the proceeds from sales of the coins will support the construction of the Black Patriots Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. near the Lincoln Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

The obverse of the silver dollar, designed by Mint Sculptor/Engraver John Mercanti, is a portrait of Crispus Attucks, the first patriot killed in the infamous Boston Massacre in 1770, the event that many historians believe triggered the Revolutionary War.

The reverse design, by Ed Dwight, depicting a Black Patriot family, is also the design of the sculpture for the Black Patriots Memorial, honoring not only the black soldiers who fought for freedom, but also the families who supported them. Dwight, the first African American to be trained as an astronaut, has created more than 55 monuments and memorials to honor notable African Americans, and his art appears in private collections, major museums and at the Smithsonian Institution.

Of special interest is the Black Patriot’s Young Collector’s Edition, the latest in the Mint’s popular series. Limited to only 20,000 sets, it includes the Uncirculated Silver Dollar in an entertaining, informative package.

In addition, the Mint is offering the Black Patriots Coin-and-Stamp Set, featuring the Proof Silver Dollar and four stamps honoring African American patriots who made significant contributions to our nation: abolitionist Frederick Douglass, inventor Benjamin Banneker, soldier Salem Poor, and Underground Railroad conductor Harriet Tubman.

Available at pre-issue discount prices through April 4, the Proof Silver Dollar is \$33; the Uncirculated Silver Dollar \$30, and the Two-Coin Proof and Uncirculated Set \$59.95; the Young Collector’s Edition \$37, and the Black Patriots Coin & Stamp Set, featuring the Proof Silver Dollar and four commemorative stamps, \$79.

After April 4, Proof Silver Dollar is \$37; the Uncirculated Silver Dollar \$32, and the Two-Coin Proof and Uncirculated Set \$64.95; the Young Collector’s Edition \$40, and the Black Patriots Coin & Stamp Set \$84.

To find out how to order the Black Patriots Silver Dollar, please call 1-800-MINT-USA or call (202) 283-2646. To take a look at the coin design, visit the Mint’s website at www.usmint.gov.

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